

Rep. Bruce Braley (D-Iowa) announced that the 2007 Farm Bill Conference Report, which passed the House today, includes Rep. Braley's New Era Act (HR 872), to authorize and implement a renewable energy workforce education program. The House-passed Farm Bill agreement also includes Rep. Braley's language adding "ice storms and blizzards" as conditions making small businesses eligible for emergency disaster relief loans from the Small Business Administration. **Braley's New Era Renewable Energy Proposal Included in House-Passed Farm Bill Agreement**

*Braley's "Ice Storms and Blizzards" Language also Included in Farm Bill*

**Washington, May 14** - Rep. Bruce Braley (D-Iowa) announced that the 2007 Farm Bill Conference Report, which passed the House today, includes Rep. Braley's New Era Act (HR 872), to authorize and implement a renewable energy workforce education program. The House-passed Farm Bill agreement also includes Rep. Braley's language adding "ice storms and blizzards" as conditions making small businesses eligible for emergency disaster relief loans from the Small Business Administration.

Congressman Braley voted to support the Conference Report on the Farm Bill, H.R. 2419, which passed the House 318-106.

"I applaud the conference committee's work to reach an agreement on the Farm Bill, and I'm happy that my New Era program to grow the renewable energy workforce is closer to becoming a reality," Braley said. "The New Era program will train and educate a new generation of Iowans with the necessary skills for the rapidly-growing renewable fuels industry. This program will create Iowa jobs while reducing our dependence on foreign oil--that's a win-win situation."

"I'm pleased that the Farm Bill also included my "ice storms and blizzards" language. Iowans know what a serious impact winter storms can have on farms and businesses. This language will make it easier for small business owners impacted by severe winter weather to receive federal disaster assistance from the Small Business Administration."

"The Farm Bill takes several important steps to move agriculture forward. The bill ensures that subsidies go to the family farmers who need help, not to corporate farms. This legislation will help ease the strain of rising food prices, make further investments in new generations of renewable fuels, and enhance rural economic development. I hope the President will quickly sign this critical legislation into law." □

The New Era Act was the first bill introduced by Rep. Braley as a member of Congress. The

language was added to the House and Senate versions of the Farm Bill last year.

Specifically, the New Era provision in the Farm Bill would authorize the Secretary of Agriculture to give grants to community colleges who implement renewable energy workforce education programs. Funding levels for the grant program would be determined through the Congressional appropriations process depending on demand.

Braley's "ice storm and blizzards" language would allow the Small Business Administration (SBA) to extend loans to small businesses in the wake of severe damage from ice storms and blizzards even in the absence a presidential disaster zone declaration. The Braley language allows the SBA to more quickly extend relief to small businesses affected by severe winter weather. Braley first proposed this change in the wake of the severe ice storms that affected Iowa in February and March of 2007.

The Farm Bill Conference report now moves to the full Senate, where it is expected to be considered this week.